

ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

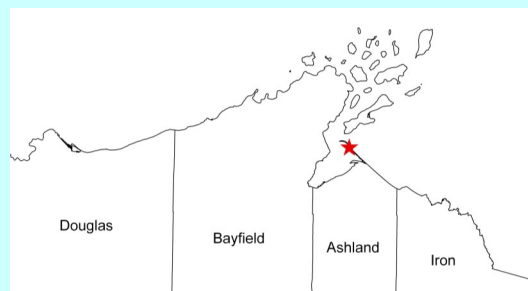
Long Island—Chequamegon Point

Approximate Size: 640 (wetland area: 150 acres)*

Ownership: National Park Service/Private/Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 2014

GLCWC Classification: N.A.



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Site Description

Western Lake Superior's most extensive and least disturbed coastal barrier spit separates the waters of Chequamegon Bay from Lake Superior. The natural dynamics of erosion and deposition are expressed in the changing size and shape of the spit over time. An especially vivid example of this occurred following a severe November storm in the late 1970s when Long Island and Chequamegon Point were joined.

Important communities at the site include Great Lakes beach and dune, northern dry forest, interdunal wetland, open bog, shrub swamp, and wet sand flats. While wetlands cover only a very small percentage of the site, the interdunal ponds located near the western end of Long Island are a very rare community statewide and also provide habitat for several rare plants. The bogs of the ridge and swale system on the Chequamegon Bay side of the island generally contain a subset of the common bog ericads and sedges. Wet sand flats occur along Chequamegon Bay at the former gap between the point and the island; the flora here is an interesting mix of plants from many wetland communities. The beach and dune system is best developed where active deposition of sand is occurring. Owing to wind, wave, and ice exposure the beaches are sparsely vegetated, with the most common species being marram grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*) and beach-pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*). Most of Long Island is forested with mature stands of jack, red and white pine (*Pinus banksiana*, *P. resinosa*, *P. strobus*), as well as Hill's oak (*Quercus ellipsoidalis*). The island provides an important migratory stopover for shorebirds (when water levels are favorable) as well as passerines and raptors. Large numbers of gulls and terns are also attracted to the site. Rare dune insects, absent from other dune systems on western Lake Superior, occur here.

*Acreages are rough estimates based on GIS and aerial photographs and do not reflect ownership or management boundaries.

Threats

The non-native invasive plants purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and narrow-leaf cat-tail (*Typha angustifolia*) were noted in low numbers in surveys in 2005. Control of these species and periodic monitoring for these and other invasive species is recommended.

Additional Comments

This site comprises the most intact coastal barrier spit system on western Lake Superior. Included are excellent examples of both rare and widespread natural communities. A number of rare animal species are resident here, some of them specialized to dune environments. The site is also important as a migratory stopover for birds. Of great added significance is the role this coastal barrier spit plays in protecting the vast wetlands of the Bad and Kakagon River systems just to the south.

Abbreviations and Helpful References

GLCWC - Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Classification.- http://glc.org/wetlands/pdf/wetlands-class_rev1.pdf

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa - <http://www.badriver-nsn.gov/home>

Lake Superior Binational Program - <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/lakesuperior/>

WDNR Coastal Wetlands webpages - <http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands"

WDNR/NHI - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Inventory Program.
<http://dnr.wi.gov> , Keyword: "natural heritage"



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Great Lakes Beach and low dunes extend along the shore of Long Island (left), while a dense Northern Dry Forest dominated by jack pine and occasional red and white pine covers much of the interior of the island (right).

Suggested Citation

E.J. Epstein, A. Galvin and W.A. Smith. 2002. Site Description for Long Island-Chequamegon Point. In: "A Data Compilation and Assessment of Coastal Wetlands of Wisconsin's Great Lakes." PUBL ER-803 2002. Updated by A. Staffen in 2015. <http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands long island"



This project was funded by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act.